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rate geological investigation of the situation, are not borne out by recent recurrences of the disastrous slides. Thus "the reader who would thoroughly understand the canal" may after all have to "wade through" the more accurate descriptions of the country contained in other books.

Under the caption "The Panama canal in international law," the author of this section says: "It is important to have a knowledge of the antecedent history to appreciate the full bearings of the present treaty obligations of the United States with respect to the canal." Such knowledge might easily have been acquired and presented to the reader in succinct form, since a great deal has been written by diplomatic historians on this phase of the transit question. For the lack of such a summary, these few pages devoted to the international law of the canal are of very little value. Nor is it necessary to add anything in the way of comment on the short section devoted to sanitation, costs of work, elements of success, and so forth, which contains some figures in columnar form, and a conclusion quoted from a speech of Senator Seward sixty years ago.

This book having been written for the most part by naval officers, the section which is devoted to "The navy and the Panama canal" is of the greatest interest to the general reader, more especially at this juncture when the great war is going on and the United States navy may be called into action at any time. Part four, devoted to the commercial importance of the canal, is written by a layman, but by an authority withal. Herein will be found an admirable summary of this author's contributions to the subject in other books and magazines.

The compilers of this volume should also be commended for appending a series of excellent maps, produced by the canal commission and by the engineers in charge of the work. On the whole, however, the book is nothing more nor less than a compilation, and there is not very much to say for it at that.

LINDLEY M. KEASBEY

A history of travel in America. Showing the development of travel and transportation from the crude methods of the canoe and the dog-sled to the highly organized railway systems of the present, together with a narrative of the human experiences and changing social conditions that accompanied this economic conquest of the continent. By Seymour Dunbar. In four volumes. (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1915. 339; 400; 383; 404 p. \$10.00 net)

Four hundred pictures "selected and arranged to form a flowing and connected story of its own, independent of the text" constitute the most important contribution of these four volumes which have been christened

with the above imposing and comprehensive title. The collection and printing of these pictures were decidedly worth while. Here there can be followed with comparative ease and enjoyment the development of the means of transportation in the United States from the time when the pirogue and the canoe were paddled by the dusky natives over the inland waters up to the time of the building of the first transcontinental railroad. The only criticism of any moment which can be passed on this part of Mr. Dunbar's work is his failure to inform his readers in regard to the sources of his reproductions. Many of the prints reproduced are rare and the knowledge of the whereabouts of the originals would have been of the greatest advantage to historians.

It is a pity that Mr. Dunbar did not decide to cut down his account of these pictures to the pages of a modest single volume; he would then have rendered a real service. Instead of this he has buried them in fifteen hundred and twenty-nine pages, which he has attempted to fill with a history of the social life of the people of the United States, a subject about which his knowledge is very limited. He has no conception of the relation of transportation to development of commerce, which should have formed the basic thought of his book. Instead of this the whole subject, as far as it is confined to the means of travel, is treated in a purely antiquarian manner.

His method of historical interpretation is anecdotal in quality. When he comes to an explanation of the hostility of the Iroquois to the French, he is satisfied with telling the story of Champlain's engagement with them as the adequate cause. "The Indians," he writes, "could not cope with a weapon [the gun] like that, but the story of its existence and use went through the wilderness and the relationship between France and the Five Nations was fixed. For nearly a hundred and fifty years afterward the effects of that prejudice were still apparent, despite many later efforts of France to secure the Iroquois as allies." The story is hoary with age and has been sanctified by many repetitions. Still today the historian is more likely to seek an explanation of this antagonism in the development of the fur trade and other economic causes.

Much attention is paid by the author to the westward march of the settlements, and the picture of the stalwart and virtuous pioneer living in arcadian simplicity with his fellows is pictured in glowing terms. To anyone who has read the letters of Sir William Johnson or of others equally familiar with the people of the frontier the statement that "though the region was far removed from effective legal control, crime was practically non-existent" appears simply ridiculous. Contemporary sources more generally — and also incorrectly — picture the western region as peopled with "banditti" of the worst kind.

Misstatements of facts are as common as those of interpretation. Mr.

Dunbar asserts that "no army of soldiers could have made the journey on which the cabin dwellers of the southern mountains were soon to set forth." He forgets evidently the victory of General Bouquet which occurred just previously to the period he has in mind and that of General Wayne that took place shortly afterwards; he surely is not ignorant of the part played by United States troops in winning the trans-Mississippi region nor of the order which is maintained today in the extreme north-west of Canada by the mounted police.

The author places the beginnings of the westward advance in the years 1770 and 1771, though it had begun twenty years before. He glorifies Daniel Boone, as so many local historians before him have done, and calls him the instigator of James [*sic*] Henderson's scheme of founding the colony of Transylvania. Evidently he has not yet learned that Boone was only the agent of Henderson, in whose interests Daniel made his too greatly exalted journey to Kentucky.

The above examples have been taken from the first volume but they could be duplicated from any of the four. Still the reproductions of the pictures are good, and now and then as one turns the pages some interesting scrap of narrative catches the eye and holds the attention. So on the whole the work was worth printing; but why did the publishers permit the addition of the weird index? It is a wonderful contraption, incapable of use.

C. W. A.

Famous living Americans. With portraits. Edited by Mary Griffin Webb, and Edna Lenore Webb. (Greencastle, Indiana: Charles Webb and Company, 1915. 594 p. \$5.00)

Famous living Americans is an attractive title. It appeals to the average individual as a book that he ought to read and which he should own. It also suggests a most obvious fact, that we should have more accurate information about our notable compatriots.

The editors state in their preface that they intended the work to serve two purposes: "First, to supply the general reader in compact form the biographies of a considerable number of the most prominent present day Americans. . . Second, to provide inspirational and authoritative source material for use as the basis of papers and speeches, and to give practical directions for the composition and preparation of biographical and other addresses." Thus the book is an English text and a reference work on current biography.

Forty-three characters have been selected for the biographical sketches. In general, little fault can be found with the choice of the "famous living Americans," although it is interesting to examine the grounds for their fame. Roosevelt is the only historian with sufficient reputation